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*The Social Basis of Religion.* By SIMON N. PATTEN. New York: Macmillan, 1911. Pp. xviii+247. \$1.25 net.

The author's professed purpose is to combine the economic interpretation of history and social psychology. Religion is the union of the two. Degeneration is objective and economic, while regeneration is psychic and personal (p. v). The discussion in fifteen chapters of such varied subjects as scientific method, the will, the social process, the social mission of the church, does not aim at consecutiveness, but at bringing together several points of view which have been separated heretofore. Two viewpoints among many interesting ones stand out prominently.

First, the author holds strongly to an objective view of morality and to the necessity of this objective view as the basis of religious thought and work. The only valid tests of action are not personal tests but the results of a study of the objective effects of any proposed measure upon society. The ultimate tests are health, wealth, and efficiency. Consequently, the social mission of the church is not to save individual souls but to promote movements and measures which will increase health, wealth, and efficiency, to adopt a definite social program and engage in such work as improving the family type, furthering public health and temperance movements, and industrial legislation promoting the health of women- and child-workers and the greater efficiency of all workers. The church must learn "that evils have specific causes that may be regulated and removed. They never arise from the general laws of nature. . . ." Not only, however, must the mission of the church become a social mission, but religious thought must be socialized as well on this same objective basis. A religion of authority must be given up and a social religion or social morality, that looks to consequences, must be substituted. And here again the author strongly asserts that the end and test of morality is not happiness or culture but race perpetuation, that is, increased vigor and longevity.

A second conspicuous point of view in the book is the economic interpretation of history which constitutes almost a distinct bias especially in the more theoretical parts of the discussion. The author says: "While many good things are natural, most bad things are economic," and sin, misery, and poverty are one problem and their antidote is income (p. 40). Here the author's bias leads him to exaggerate the importance of poverty. His explanation does not seem to account for some of the prevalent and conspicuous types of evil of the present day, for instance, political corruption and immorality and vice among the well to do. In the former case not even the fondest adherents of the

economic interpretation would allege poverty as the cause. The jack-pots in various states, and the costs of presidential campaigns are too patent refutations. And recent investigations of vice in our cities and of women in industry seem to show that poverty-vice is not the nexus even in as many of these cases as we had supposed it to be, much less in the case of the patrons of vice. Nor does it seem that the author's emphasis upon the naturalness of goodness is wholly justifiable. In our complex social system the primitive order of things, as Ross and others have pointed out, must be changed to meet the conditions of a new and more artificial civilization before goodness as we understand it can be attained. However, the author does not follow these principles relentlessly throughout his discussion but includes many other factors in his analysis of the religious situation.

Many other views of more or less academic interest are to be found in the earlier chapters. The defect of the book lies in the indirectness and brevity of the discussion of the actual present status of religious thought and church work. The inadequacy of these two phases of religion in the present situation is so patent and the remedies so plain that the reader becomes impatient of the rather long and painstaking analyses that furnish a theoretical basis for statements that are admittedly true.

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*A Peasant Sage of Japan: The Life and Work of Sontoku Ninomiya.*

Translated from the *Hotokuki* by TADASU YOSHIMOTO. Longmans, Green & Co., 1912. Pp. xxviii+254. \$1.50.

The book consists of thirty-three short chapters and five divisions of an appendix. It is the story of the life-work of a remarkable peasant of Japan, Kinjiro Ninomiya, called after his death, "Sontoku," meaning, "The Virtuous." The story is simple and essentially human, and emphasizes in a forceful way the unity of disinterested service for mankind the world over. It presents a picture of social service of an almost modern type and almost more than modern idealism carried on a hundred years ago by a follower of Buddha and Confucius in a country then closed to the civilized world.

The volume is a translation, more free than literal, of another written the year following the death of Sontoku by his greatest disciple, Kokei Tomita. That volume was entitled *Hotokuki* meaning literally "A Record of the Return (Repayment) of Virtue." It was widely distributed at the instance of the emperor, and has been recently republished